

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 17443 201721Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 17443

EXDIS

FROM DICK MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJECT: UK REACTION TO SAG BANNING ACTIONS

1. AS STEVE LOW AND I ENTERED DAVID OWEN'S OFFICE THIS AFTERNOON HE WAS AT HIS DESK WRITING A LETTER TO PIK BOTHA. HE IS DEEPLY CONCERNED BUT AS UNCERTAIN AS WE ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACTIONS. IN HIS LETTER TO BOTHA OWEN IS EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT THEIR RECENT ACTIONS ARE AN ABERRATION BUT WARNING BOTHA THAT A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL POLICIES CANNOT BUT HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES.

2. WE ALL AGREED THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN ACTIONS WOULD INEVITABLY SPILL OVER ONTO RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA,BUT STEVE AND I RAISED THE POSSIBILITY THAT A TOUGHER INTERNAL STAND COULD ALLOW VORSTER TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IN THE OTHER TWO AREAS. OWEN AGREED THAT THIS IS A PATTERN WHICH WE HAVE SEEN BEFORE. OWEN EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE DIFFICULT POSITION IN WHICH VORSTER'S ACTION PLACED THE UK GOVERNMENT, UNDOUBTEDLY A REFERENCE TO THE COST TO THE UK OF ANY SANCTIONS ACTION AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.
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HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ARMS EMBARGO WHICH MIGHT NATURALLY ARISE OUT OF THE NAMIBIA SITUATION.

3. OWEN SAID TWICE THAT HE HOPED THE US WOULD HOLD A STEADY COURSE AND NOT LOSE ITS NERVE. WE INTERPRETED THIS TO BE A CAUTION AGAINST OVERREACTION. BUT

IN A SENSE I BELIEVE OWEN WAS REMINDING HIMSELF NOT TO
OVERREACT, IT BEING HIS MANNER TO THINK OUT LOUD. I
TOLD OWEN THAT VARIOUS OPTIONS WERE UNDER CONSIDERATION
IN WASHINGTON AND UNDERTOOK TO KEEP HIM ADVISED. HE
EXPRESSED APPRECIATION.

BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

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